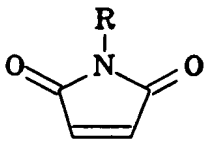
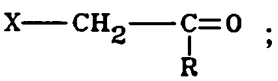
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for dissociating a zinc ion from a CCHC zinc finger of a retroviral nucleocapsid protein, said method comprising contacting said retroviral nucleocapsid protein with a compound selected from the group consisting of:

disulfides having the formula R—S—S—R;

maleimides having the formula  ;

Sub. C1

α-halogenated ketones having the formula  ;

hydrazides having the formula R—NH—NH—R;

nitric oxide and derivatives containing the NO group;

cupric ions and complexes containing Cu^{+2}; and

ferric ions and complexes containing Fe^{+3};

wherein R is any atom or molecule, and X is selected from the group consisting of F, I, Br and Cl.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein said retroviral nucleocapsid protein is incorporated into an intact retrovirus.

3. The method of claim **1** wherein said retroviral nucleocapsid protein is an HIV-1 nucleocapsid protein.

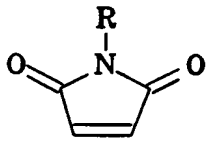
4. The method of claim **1** further comprising detecting the dissociation of said zinc ion from the CCHC zinc finger of said retroviral nucleocapsid protein.

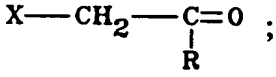
5. The method of claim **4** wherein detecting the dissociation of said zinc ion from the CCHC zinc finger of said retroviral nucleocapsid protein is carried out

using a method selected from the group consisting of capillary electrophoresis, immunoblotting, Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR), high pressure liquid chromatography (HPLC), detecting release of radioactive zinc-65, detecting fluorescence, and detecting gel mobility shift.

6. A method for inactivating a retrovirus, said method comprising contacting said retrovirus with a compound selected from the group consisting of:

disulfides having the formula R—S—S—R;

maleimides having the formula  ;

α-halogenated ketones having the formula  ;

hydrazides having the formula R—NH—NH—R;

nitric oxide and derivatives containing the NO group;

cupric ions and complexes containing Cu^{+2}; and

ferric ions and complexes containing Fe^{+3};

wherein R is any atom or molecule, and X is selected from the group consisting of F, I, Br and Cl.

7. The method of claim **6**, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of: Tetramethylthiuram Disulfide, Tetraethylthiuram Disulfide, Tetraisopropylthiuram Disulfide, Tetrabutylthiuram Disulfide, Dicyclopentamethylenethiuram Disulfide, Isopropylxanthic Disulfide, O,O-Diethyl Dithiobis-(Thioformate), Benzoyl Disulfide, Benzoylmethyl Disulfide, Formamidine Disulfide 2HCl, 2-(Diethylamino)ethyl Disulfide, Aldrithiol-2, Aldrithiol-4, 2,2-Dithiobis(Pyridine N-Oxide), 6,6-Dithiodinicotinic Acid, 4-Methyl-2-Quinolyl Disulfide, 2-Quinolyl Disulfide, 2,2 Dithiobis(benzothiazole), 2,2-Dithiobis(4-Tert-Butyl-1-Isopropyl)-Imidazole, 4-(dimethylamino)phenyl disulfide, 2-Acetamidophenyl Disulfide, 2,3-Dimethoxyphenyl Disulfide, 4-Acetamidophenyl

Disulfide, 2-(Ethoxycarboxamido)phenyl Disulfide, 3-Nitrophenyl Disulfide, 4-Nitrophenyl Disulfide, 2-Aminophenyl Disulfide, 2,2 Dithiobis(benzonitrile), p-Tolyl Disulfoxide, 2,4,5-Trichlorophenyl Disulfide, 4-Methylsulfonyl-2-Nitrophenyl Disulfide, 4-Methylsulfonyl-2-Nitrophenyl Disulfide, 3,3-Dithiodipropionic Acid, N,N-Diformyl-L-Cystine, Trans-1,2-Dithiane-4,5-Diol, 2-Chloro-5-Nitrophenyl Disulfide, 2-Amino-4-Chlorophenyl Disulfide, 5,5-Dithiobis(2-Nitrobenzoic Acid), 2,2-Dithiobis(1-Naphtylamine), 2,4-Dinitrophenyl *p*-Tolyl Disulfide, 4-Nitrophenyl *p*-Tolyl Disulfide, and 4-Chloro-3-Nitrophenyl Disulfideformamidine disulfide dihydrochloride.

8. The method of claim **6**, wherein said retrovirus is selected from the group consisting of *Lentiviruses* and *Oncoviruses*.

9. The method of claim **6**, wherein said retrovirus is a HIV-1 retrovirus.

10. The method of claim **6**, wherein the method further comprises contacting said retrovirus with an anti-retroviral agent.

11. The method of claim **6**, wherein the method further comprises contacting said retrovirus with a nucleotide analogue.

12. The method of claim **6**, wherein the method further comprises contacting said retrovirus with AZT.

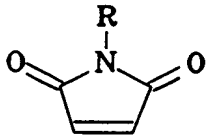
13. A method of selecting a compound capable of dissociating a zinc ion chelated with a CCHC zinc finger of a retroviral nucleocapsid protein, said method comprising:

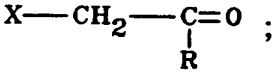
(a) contacting the CCHC zinc finger of said retroviral nucleocapsid protein with an electron acceptor; and

(b) detecting the dissociation of said zinc ion from the CCHC zinc finger of said retroviral nucleocapsid protein.

14. The method of claim **13** wherein said electron acceptor is a compound selected from the group consisting of

disulfides having the formula R—S—S—R;

maleimides having the formula  ;

α-halogenated ketones having the formula  ;

hydrazides having the formula R—NH—NH—R;

nitric oxide and derivatives containing the NO group;

cupric ions and complexes containing Cu^{+2}; and

ferric ions and complexes containing Fe^{+3};

wherein R is any atom or molecule, and X is selected from the group consisting of F, I, Br and Cl.

15. The method of claim **13** wherein said step of detecting the dissociation of said zinc ion from the CCHC zinc finger of said retroviral nucleocapsid protein is carried out using a method selected from the group consisting of capillary electrophoresis, immuno-blotting, Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR), high pressure liquid chromatography (HPLC), detecting release of radioactive zinc-65, detecting fluorescence, and detecting gel mobility shift.

16. A kit for selecting a compound capable of dissociating a zinc ion from a CCHC zinc finger of a nucleocapsid protein, said kit comprising a retroviral nucleocapsid protein and instructions for detecting the dissociation of said zinc ion from said nucleocapsid protein.

17. The kit of claim **16**, wherein said retroviral nucleocapsid protein is supplied with the zinc ion chelated with the CCHC zinc finger of said retroviral nucleocapsid protein.

18. The kit of claim **16**, wherein said retroviral nucleocapsid protein is derived from a HIV-1 retrovirus.

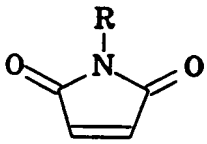
19. The kit of claim **16**, wherein said nucleocapsid protein is incorporated in an intact retrovirus.

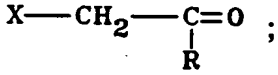
20. The kit of claim **19**, wherein said retrovirus is selected from the group consisting of *Lentiviruses* and *Oncoviruses*.

21. The kit of claim **19**, wherein said nucleocapsid protein is incorporated into an intact HIV-1 retrovirus.

22. The kit of claim **16**, wherein said kit further comprises instructions for the selection of a compound selected from the group consisting of:

disulfides having the formula R—S—S—R;

maleimides having the formula  ;

α-halogenated ketones with the structure  ;

hydrazides having the formula R—NH—NH—R;

nitric oxide and derivatives containing the NO group;

cupric ions and complexes containing Cu^{+2}; and

ferric ions and complexes containing Fe^{+3};

wherein R is any atom or molecule, and X is selected from the group consisting of F, I, Br and Cl.

23. The kit of claim **16**, wherein said instructions are directed to detecting the dissociation of said zinc ion from said nucleocapsid protein using a method selected from the group consisting of capillary electrophoresis, immuno-blotting, Nuclear

Magnetic Resonance (NMR), high pressure liquid chromatography (HPLC), detecting release of radioactive zinc-65, detecting fluorescence and detecting a gel mobility shift.